

# Is The Party-Form Obsolete? A Response to Recent Critics

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## Preface

Last year, I wrote a paper titled *Communization and Cultural Revolution*, attempting to build dialogue between Marxist-Leninist-Maoists and left-communists, especially communizers. One of the most obvious areas of disagreements is the party, absolutely central to Marxism-Leninism-Maoism but rejected by most communizers, with the most powerful critique being the one articulated by *Endnotes*, *Research & Destroy*, and Joshua Clover and Aaron Benanav. While I attempted to address some left-communist critiques in my earlier paper, I don't think I sufficiently dealt with this argument, thus the writing of this paper.

Other left-communist critiques of the party exist, such as Hardt and Negri's. While these are certainly worthy of a response (and while I already noted a critique by Samir Amin of Hardt and Negri's conception of a "flat" Empire in my critique of *Tiqqun*), this paper is specifically focused on the critique mentioned above.

## §1 Recent Critiques of the Party-Form

The best-developed critique of the party-form is that of Joshua Clover and Aaron Benanav, in *Can Dialectics Break BRICS?* (later expanded upon by Clover in *Riot. Strike. Riot.*), published in the *South Atlantic Quarterly* in 2014. Clover and Benanav's argument is not, as some overhasty readers might assume, the typical moral denunciation of the party motivated by *ressentiment*: it is instead a historical materialist argument, one which argues not that the party-form is *bad* but rather *obsolete*. Specifically, Clover and Benanav are arguing against Jodi Dean and Bruno Bosteels, both of whom argue for a resurrection of the classic Leninist party in light of the failure of the "WTO 99" school of anarchism<sup>1</sup>. Clover and Benanav's argument against Dean and Bosteels is not a pure negation, arguing for a return to "horizontalism": they acknowledge the limits of the "WTO 99" school. But as for the classic vanguard-party:<sup>2</sup>

The political desire for this organizational model, however, does not equate to its political possibility. This is the import of Karl Marx's

1. Joshua Clover and Aaron Benanav, "Can Dialectics Break BRICS?," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 113, no. 4 (2014): 744-5.

2. *Ibid.*, 745.

(1994: 1) timely reminder that “men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past.” We argue here not against revolutionary strategy as such; contrarily, we affirm that strategy and tactics must arise from conditions as they have developed historically. As will shortly become clear, a materialist analysis has dissuaded us from believing that the old capitalist core, its industrial basis hollowed from within according to exigencies of competition-driven development, might provide for the advance of a party along traditional Leninist lines (even with certain modifications). Indeed, the evidence points strongly to the contrary. The collective experience of work and life that gave rise to the vanguard party during the era of industrialization has passed away with industrialization itself. We recognize as materialists that the capital-labor relation that made such a party effective—not only as idea but as reality—is no longer operative. A changed capital-labor relation will give rise to new forms of organization. We should not criticize present-day struggles in the name of idealized reconstructions from the past. Rather, we should describe the communist potential that presents itself immanently in the limits confronted by today’s struggles.

Here they move to the “value-form” school of Marxism, which includes the *Neue Marx-Lektüre* (Michael Heinrich and company) and the *Wertkritik* school, organized around *Krisis*. It’s the latter group which Clover and Benanav draw from. Here, of course, communism is conceived primarily as “annihilating the value relation”, “the abolition of any index between labor contributed to society and one’s access to the social store”: “the mere seizure of production and its surplus may provide the *socialist horizon* but “the abstract domination and the exploitation of labor characteristic of capitalism are grounded, ultimately, not in the appropriation of surplus by the laboring classes, but in the form of labor in capitalism” (Postone 1993:161)”<sup>3</sup>. Value-form analyses, especially from the *Wertkritik* school, rely on the conception of an exoteric Marx, concerned with distribution who became the source, through Engels, for “traditional Marxism” (Heinrich calls it “worldview Marxism”), and an esoteric Marx, the critical Marx of value-form analysis. How could the esoteric Marx become the exoteric Marx, asks Postone (there must be, after all, a historical reason)? Borrowing from *Endnotes*, Clover and Benanav call the reason *programmatism* “a set for which the integral is probably *lower-limit councilism*, *upper-limit dictatorship of the proletariat*.”; they borrow Dauvé’s description: “The reality of the enterprise, as a form of production specifically capitalist, was not questioned. Thinking the abolition of economy was even less in the cards....Self-management by the workers’ councils is capital seen from the point of view of the worker, i.e. from the point of view of the cycle of productive capitalism”; Clover and Benanav don’t consider programmatism to be inherently erroneous, noting “Marx was at least occasionally a programmatist *in his time*, as were Vladimir Lenin, Antonie Pannekoek, and Rosa Luxemburg”<sup>4</sup>. Later, they will describe programmatism as “a struggle to alter distribution by managing production such as possible within

3. Clover and Benanav, “Can Dialectics Break BRICS?,” 747.

4. Ibid., 748.

certain limits of labor-intensiveness in the value chain”<sup>5</sup>. Finally, Clover and Benanav note that Postone “suggests that the task of understanding the basis of traditional Marxism would involve taking up the tension between volumes 1 and 3 of *Capital*, which he rightly understands as tilting toward analyses of value and of price, and thus capital as seen from the positions of production and distribution, respectively”<sup>6</sup>. To this they say that the “contradiction between value and price, wherein the fratricidal intercapitalist struggle for profit must expel labor from the production process, increases the organic composition of capital and identically the ratio of surplus to productive labor. These changes correspond to the eclipse of the workers’ movements in the now postindustrial core.” Here they note that Dean, too, has noted the slow death of organized labor in the US, but criticise Dean for neglecting to ask *why* this should happen. “Neoliberalism” is not an answer. Instead, Clover and Benanav point to the crisis in profitability in the current cycle of accumulation from 1973 onwards, and to policy as an attempt to shore up profitability, which “shifts profits to sectors that generate price but not new value”: finance, insurance, real estate<sup>7</sup>. The result is “fewer workers generating less value”, and, according to Clover and Benanav, this rules out programmatism, because it destroys the “organic unity” of the industrial workers (creating a “problem of composition”)<sup>8</sup>.

Clover and Benanav then move to claims regarding the party, noting that Dean “effectively constitutes organization and party as normative, offering a “required standard” and therefore an ethics”, and thus can only accept ethical criticisms<sup>9</sup>. To this, Clover and Benanav respond that this ignores material conditions, over the objection that Dean (and Žižek) are trying to “rescue” the party-form by arguing that they have not understood how the party-form is tied to the 20th century.

The next stop for Clover and Benanav thus must be a description of the material conditions that enabled the Leninist party, arguing that it emerged from the class-formation of the proletariat from heterogeneous masses (“peasants, shopkeepers, artisans, the lumpen”), given an “organic unity” by industrialization: this “organic unity of class interests” allowed the party to avoid “sum[ming] and averag[ing] the interests of workers or provid[ing] a compromise among class fractions”: “Industrialization would materially transform the class, the “in itself,” which might then become “for itself” by making proletarians’ class-belonging the most important fact about them”<sup>10</sup>. Later, Clover and Benanav note a further condition: “the importance of industry in the classical workers’ movement was not only about unification but also about power, the power to shut down production”<sup>11</sup>. Thus, “when actual machines replace the living labor of class and party machine to such a degree that the internal unity of the proletariat is broken, the dream of program, with or without apologies, is at an end”<sup>12</sup>.

Now comes the BRICS: Clover and Benanav examine the claim that Brazil,

5. Ibid., 752.

6. Ibid., 748-9.

7. Ibid., 749.

8. Ibid., 750.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid., 751.

11. Ibid., 757.

12. Ibid., 751.

Russia, India, China, and South Africa might still have the conditions for programmatism. Arrighi, of course, notes that, paraphrased by Clover and Benanav, “when the center of the capitalist world system shifts, it transfers to a container of power with an economy still ascending its industrial phase, that is, one that features a lower organic composition of capital, where investment-driven productivity has not yet reached limits of profitability, the dialectical development of value production is in its glorious springtime, and these conditions provide an economy that might more effectively soak up mobile capital in search of better returns”<sup>13</sup>. They note that while historically core and periphery diverge, the BRICS (as well as, historically, the Soviet Union, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan) have managed to converge with the core, with high growth rates especially after 2003. Manufacturing has also shifted to the periphery. Yet Clover and Benanav argue that removing a comparative lens, the BRICS economies are not in fact dominated by manufacturing:<sup>14</sup>:

China’s 97 million manufacturing workers provide a less impressive picture when viewed as an aliquot part of its total workforce of 770 million (OECD 2010: 116, table). In 2007 manufacturing employment accounted for only 12.6 percent of China’s workers. Similarly in India, manufacturing made up 12.1 percent of the workforce in 2004–5 (170, table). Of this, 61 percent of workers, most of them informal, were in microenterprises of fewer than five employees (26). By contrast, at its height in the early 1970s, manufacturing accounted for around 27 percent of the workforce in the developed countries, and more than that in Germany, Japan, and the UK (UNCTAD 2003: 95)

Thus Clover and Benanav note that these new industrializers have not inherited the model of the early or middle industrial powers; in fact, he notes that shifts from agriculture have moved, as in the core, to services. In fact, manufacturing has hardly remained stable in the periphery:<sup>15</sup> “In the developing countries as a whole, manufacturing fell in the 1990s, as a share of total employment, from 13.6 percent to 12.5 percent (UNCTAD 2003: 95, table). Recoveries after 2003 balance uneasily on a massive property bubble spread across many of the core countries.”. Shock therapy and deindustrialization had hit the BRICS countries in the 1990s, and the BRICS countries too had a classical Left, with parties that too fell. And indeed:<sup>16</sup>

China may be the new “workshop of the world” (again, only when seen from the perspective of the world, rather than that of its own class composition). But unlike England, it is impossible to imagine that all the world will soon be made over in its image. The expansion of China has meant the ceding of territory—not only by capital in the developed countries, which happily relocated labor-intensive elements to China, but also by other developing countries. Brazil and Mexico, like many others, saw their shares of developing-country MVA [manufacturing value added] contract substantially in

13. Clover and Benanav, “Can Dialectics Break BRICS?,” 752-3.

14. *Ibid.*, 754.

15. *Ibid.*, 755.

16. *Ibid.*, 756.

the face of China's growth. The outsized role played by China in international markets for manufactures sheds light on the peculiarity of India's growth trajectory, which seemed to skip industrialization altogether; instead, fast-growing firms have mostly specialized in tradable services (OECD 2010: 19).

Finally, Clover and Benanav note that the industrial workers of the BRICS do not have the power to end production. Here follows a disclaimer: Clover and Benanav are not "implying that the industrial workforce plays no role in social antagonism today, or that the vision of a unified proletariat, its interest presented organically by the party, is now simply to be replaced by the fantasy of an internally differentiated mass subject—as if the problem of unification could simply be sublated into the shared character of difference."<sup>17</sup>, rather:<sup>18</sup>

The key question of the political composition of the class, today, remains unanswered. Instead of a composition, there is a "composition problem" (Endnotes 2013: 47). Within the terms of that problem, the industrial proletariat (and in addition, the organized class fractions outside industry: in education, health care, sanitation, etc.) plays a key role in struggles. Witness the Arab Spring, wherein rolling strikes played a major role in bringing down long-standing dictators. The industrial working class continues to present itself as a key minority, but one that no longer bears a universal interest. Instead, it confronts a diverse class, spread out in the vast informal sector, which encapsulates "one half to three-quarters of non-agricultural employment in developing countries" (ILO n.d.: 7).

One may critically comment as to the complete ineffectiveness of the Arab Spring; most of the revolts it consisted of failed miserably at even providing democratic rule (let alone a move to socialism), with the single exception of Tunisia, however, this is a minor gripe about First World Left discussions of the Arab Spring in general, unrelated to Clover and Benanav's larger point.

What sort of struggle is sanctioned by current conditions? Clover and Benanav leave the question open in "Can Dialectics Break BRICS?" but Clover moves to address this in his later book, "Riot. Strike. Riot.: The New Era of Uprisings"<sup>19</sup>. I had discussed this book, as well as the earlier hypothesis (though in less detail, and mostly in reference to *Endnotes*), in *Communization and Cultural Revolution* a few months ago, but mostly to present it to an audience which had not yet engaged this current. To put it short, Clover develops a historical framework of *riot* (1500/1600-1850), *strike* (1790/1842-1973), and *riot-prime* (1964-today), with *riot* associated with price-setting, taking place in marketplaces and ports (and struggling against the market), and whose subjects had nothing necessarily in common "but their dispossession", and associated with circulation and thus spatialized; *strike* associated with wage-setting (aka, price-setting for labor-power), taking place on factory floor (and struggling against bosses), with participants as the industrial proletariat (see the organic unity mentioned above?) organized by classic Leninist or Lassalleian parties, and associated with production and thus temporalized; and *riot-prime*

17. Ibid., 757.

18. Ibid.

19. Joshua Clover, *Riot. Strike. Riot: The New Era of Uprisings* (Verso, 2016).

which goes beyond but necessarily includes price-setting, takes place on “square and street” (and struggling against the police, for the State has approached public spaces while production has receded from those spaces), whose subject is the conception of the proletariat as the class “without reserves”: racialized, including but not limited to the classical *lumpenproletariat* (what Clover calls “surplus populations”: the unemployed—both incidentally and structurally—and imprisoned) as well as downwardly-mobile youth, and which is also associated with circulation (this phase in particular called *circulation-prime*) and spatialized. Occupy Oakland, an uneasy union of both downwardly-mobile youth and racialized surplus populations, is Clover’s example of a riot that has moved through barricade, occupation, and into a commune. Clover argues that the riot can either move towards communication (and thus negotiation with the State) or away, towards property destruction and the control of space. Here I note my skepticism of Clover’s over-hasty assimilation of communication to negotiation (as well as his skepticism of organizing logistics workers), but otherwise will follow his argument.

In my earlier essay, I already noted some potential “crossing-over points” between Clover’s discussion of R’ and the Maoist “party of a new type”. I suggested that Maoists would do well to theorize R’, this has unfortunately gone unheeded so far. My contention then was that if Marxism-Leninism corresponded to S, Marxism-Leninism-Maoism corresponds to R’; the transition S-R’ is also the point of rupture in the Peruvian highlands (1980-1992), with earlier premonitions in the Chinese Revolution from 1927-1976 and the Black Panther Party from 1966-1982—and, I would argue, with some affinity to the New Communist Movement in Europe in its classical era of the “hot 1970s”.

## §2 Party of a New Type: Base-Building and the Partisan War-Machine

What is the Maoist “party of a new type”—or, as it has been recently called by J. Moufawad Paul in *Austerity Apparatus*<sup>20</sup> among other works, the “partisan war-machine”? How does it function? Is it, like the classic Leninist parties, conditioned by an “organic unity” of industrial workers with the power to shut down production? Does it fit with production or circulation struggles?

Here I argue that the mass line circumvents the precondition of an “organic unity” of industrial workers, and that the focus on base-building fits with circulation. This is not to suggest that the mass line is a magic wand that solves all problems, that no further thought is required or no alternative approaches should be considered. It is not, that is to say, a dogmatic incantation by which further discussion or complications are to be silenced, nor license to imitate the structures of revolutionary China like a roleplayer, much like how contemporary so-called Leninist parties interpret “democratic centralism” to refer to a dogmatic imitation of the CPSU’s structure in 1921. It is an approach to the problem of composition, not a solution.

Such an approach is sorely needed in the wake of the “anti-political” and “anti-strategic” thought of *Endnotes*: in *Communization and Cultural Revolu-*

20. Joshua Moufawad-Paul, *Austerity Apparatus* (2017).

tion, I had cited Toscano's 2011 critique<sup>21</sup>, which I will not here recapitulate (except noting the argument for the necessity of mediation); to this one might add *Endnotes: A Romantic Critique?* by Matthijs Krul<sup>22</sup>. Krul refuses the localist approach best embodied in Bernes' critique of logistics, and then moves to a critique of *Endnotes'* approach in general, arguing that it begs the question ("the revolution must abolish capitalism's mediations, and the only place it can be achieved is where capitalism's mediations are abolished"), and "this is because of a subtle idealism and ahistoricity in the argument: a dislike of 'transition' turns into a dislike of temporality and of historical causation":

This real movement is not to be identified with the workers' movement in the traditional sense, it is true, nor with an empty signifier of The Party in a nostalgia for the 2nd International, but for Marx's historical expectation of revolution to work it requires a real movement nonetheless. And 'real' here is precisely in the same sense as 'material' in 'historical materialism': i.e. roughly speaking, one based on political economy and its very real substance of goods, technology, work, survival and reproduction through production and consumption. It is precisely these mediations that are not simply to be negated: categories which, however 'mediating', are not purely historical to capitalism and are not only 'real abstractions' in the way class, gender, race, and the other misfortunes are, but which pose questions for every imaginable society that suffers scarcity.

After all, it is only when scarcity is abolished in some sense that the real 'realm of freedom begins', not before that; and this is a material requirement, not a question of distribution, nor a question of abolishing the mediations that represent this scarcity to us. The question therefore arises how before this is achieved (and however it is to be achieved), real existing humans get from A to B, from their present state of social relations of production to another. A merely negative answer, which rightly rejects the workerism and nostalgia of the present Marxisms, but does not offer an answer beyond the irruption of the revolution as the Event of freedom, indeed fails to go beyond some of the oldest anarchist views of spontaneity and rejection as the revolution itself. The history of pure negativity as opposition to capitalism, whether through *fin-de-siècle* anarchism or the Frankfurt School, is no stronger on this point than is the history of all the workerist programmes from Mao to Eurocommunism. In this sense I would argue that while *Endnotes* asks the right questions — and some of their descriptions of the relationship between labor as a commodity, the law of value, and capitalist society as such are among the best out there — their answers to these questions fall back into an ahistoricism and romanticism of the 'persistence of an idea'. One cannot, however, bring old mole to the surface again without a good deal of burrowing into the existing earth.

21. Alberto Toscano, "Now and Never," in *Communization and its discontents*, ed. Benjamin Noys (2011).

22. Matthijs Krul, "Endnotes: A Romantic Critique?," 2014, <http://www.thenorthstar.info/2014/01/28/endnotes-a-romantic-critique/>.

While some of Krul’s article misunderstands *Endnotes* (specifically, its claim that *Endnotes*, like Dauvé, holds to an “error view” of history, shown wrong by *Endnotes* 1’s endorsement of *Théorie Communiste* over Dauvé, as Bernes himself mentions in the comment of that article), I maintain that his central point—the begging of the question, as well as the regression to localism, “pure negativity”, and anti-strategic thought—holds. In addition, one might make the tangential point that scarcity has a material condition (which Krul insists on) as well as a political condition (thus artificial scarcity, distribution &c).

What is the “mass line”? The quickest and most popular formulation is the one-liner “from the masses, to the masses”. But, like “freedom of discussion, unity of action”, it needs further explanation. It is an iterative process relying on an earlier class analysis and then a Schmittian split between friend (“the masses”) and enemy based on the interests of the various strata of society. The masses are not a homogeneous mass but a diverse group made of many strata, structured by class, race, gender, location &c. The ideas of the masses are gathered and then analysed (“processed”) based on the perspective of revolutionary Marxism: based on the long-term interests of the masses, that is, communism: the abolition of class, race, gender, (dis)ability, the State, the division between city and country, between mental and manual labor (and thus the abolition of the value-form and scarcity), the democratization and reorganization of production, consumption, and distribution, the transvaluation of all values and the transformation of culture. “Processing ideas” means that the cadres must find out what new ideas they must learn from the masses, based on the masses’ own spontaneous struggles and experiences, that the cadres did not know before: it doesn’t mean “substitute our ideas for theirs” or to use engagement as a justification for cadres’ pre-existing plans. The result is a line that adopts some of the ideas of the masses and discards the rest, based on what serves the long-term interest of the masses; the line is then returned to the masses. At any given moment, the masses will largely be divided into three groups based on their action: advanced, intermediate, backwards; the next step is to unite the advanced, win over the intermediates, and isolate the backwards. These categories aren’t static: people may move from one to the other.

One may criticise the standard conception of the mass line for its claim that the masses must be led, arguing instead that it should work to combine and facilitate the organization of many different struggles (which themselves may be organized in other forms, such as councils) and meet the needs of the masses. With this revision, the party is conceived of as subject to rather than sovereign over the masses, their struggles, and the organization produced by each struggle. In doing so, the party does not rely on a pre-existing “organic unity” but itself becomes the unity for a heterogeneous mass base.

While the mass line does manage to show a way out of the problem of composition, one may still object that this is mostly at the level of ideology; the mass subject still lacks the same sort of proximity to the means of production that industrial workers possessed before the Long Downturn, and thus the same ability to force structural changes. This is, after all, the second part of Clover’s argument about programmatism and its obsolescence. Communization argues indeed that it simply isn’t possible. How can the masses effect structural change, then? One answer that has emerged recently is *base-building*, sometimes (erroneously) called “dual power” (which properly refers to the goal, rather than the process). Base-building is not an exclusively Maoist strategy: many groups



with differing theoretical orientations (Maoists, anarchists, autonomists, communizers, “nondenominational leftists”, even left-liberals and more traditional Marxist-Leninists) are discussing, if not putting into practice, base-building; in the US, the key example of base-building to which recent experiments (the most advanced of which include Cooperation Jackson and various organizations in the Marxist Center network, such as Philly Socialists and the Communist Labor Party) look to is the Black Panther Party and its famous programs. Base-building is the creation of autonomous community institutions: the autonomy of these institutions distinguishes them from the more common front groups (controlled by a party; while the party launches these organizations as a result of mass line engagement and helps connect them to each other, it doesn’t control them once they are “on their own two feet”, so to speak, nor does it subordinate their professed functions to outreach) and nonprofits/NGOs (controlled by a specific legal structure, donors, and a board of directors); it usually implies a structure of participatory democracy. These institutions are split into two types: alternative institutions (such as a cooperative, a community clinic, a groceries program) and counter-institutions (such as a community defense group or a tenants’ union): an alternative institution meets a need, a counter-institution challenges a capitalist institution.

Base-building thus doesn’t target production, as the strike did, but rather circulation and distribution; it does not shut down circulation and distribution, as a riot does, but rather seeks to prefigure their forms under socialism, and provide support, as a strike fund would, to the masses in that critical period where the cold class war becomes hot. It forms the basis for a commune following that moment of insurrection called a riot, which, as Clover has said before, has as a necessary but not exclusive element an act of price-setting, the seizure of control over circulation. While it may not have claim to the same sort of structural changes that a strike, it coordinates well with what Clover has argued is the form of struggle in the era of riot-prime and of circulation-prime, partially because of how similar it is to many communizer visions of praxis, while refusing to move into secessionism, a strategy that, in walling off the rest of the world, forgoes any chance of abolishing the present state of things. Of course, a riot is not the only form of war that base-building can support: after all, the preferred form of struggle by Maoists (although its universality is contested, with one position holding that it is only applicable countries with a large peasantry, or that in urbanised countries it might resemble urban guerrilla tactics) isn’t the insurrectionary strategy of the “October Road” but is instead protracted people’s war, a strategy relying on rural guerrilla warfare to set up dual power through “revolutionary base areas” before encircling major cities.

To this one might object that most self-declared “Maoist” parties, especially in the First World (think, for instance, the Guevarist-in-practice “Red Guards Austin” grouping, the cult of Bob Avakian, or Marcyism: orthodox Trotskyism with a Marxist-Leninist aesthetic), function far more like pale imitations of traditional Leninist parties, and to this I would, unfortunately, agree. This is in part because the term “Maoism”, applied to the Marxist-Leninist and Trotskyist parties of the New Communist Movement, predates Maoism, born in 1980s Peru and carried out in contemporary India and the Philippines; it is also in part due to the uncritical culture associated with Internet left tendencies that focus on roleplay, nostalgia, and dogmatism rather than analysis, critique, dialogue between tendencies, strategy, and action (see Minnelli and Levin’s crit-

icism of Marcyism<sup>23</sup>). Moufawad-Paul makes a similar point in his note that even many Maoist parties (as opposed to the old “Maoist” i.e. anti-revisionist Marxist-Leninist parties) remain haunted by spectres of the “fossilized” Leninist doctrine which reached its culmination both in the Comintern structure and in the Trotskyist cult-like micro-sects<sup>24</sup>.

One might further object that this party is not a party. Historically this party emerges from more traditional Leninist vanguard parties, and indeed, it was referred to historically as a “party of a new type”; no other term has come to replace it. Further, despite the deviation of this party from the Leninist and Lassallean party-forms, it still fulfils many of the Leninist party’s functions. One would have to argue that, because of the use of the mass line and the departure from traditional Leninist or Lassallean parties, the Chinese Communist Party from 1927 to 1976 was not a party, and that neither was the Communist Party of Peru, nor the Communist Party of India (Maoist), nor the Communist Party of the Philippines. In addition, a number of Maoist commentators have stressed how much the Maoist party emerged from a *return to Lenin* that looked at adapting his strategy to new conditions rather than merely copying the final structure of the CPSU: see, for instance, Ajith’s *The Maoist Party*<sup>25</sup>. Here, a return to Moufawad-Paul’s theorization of the Maoist party as both continuity and rupture with the Leninist party is useful in articulating how the Maoist party remains a party despite its deviation from a standard Leninist or Lassallean model.

Maoist struggle continues in India, the Philippines, and Afghanistan; hopefully, it will emerge in the belly of the beast, whether under the sign of the five-headed beast or not. Onward Maoist Century!

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